has also been brought under the Chairpersonship of the Minister of Panchayati Raj and has since held three meetings in June, September and December, 2006.

Besides, the Union Minister has visited over 150 Gram Sabhas, Village Panchayats, Intermediate Panchayats and District Panchayats across 21 States/Union Territories and with 19 of them concluded State-specific Joint Statements of Conclusions. (The Joint Statement with Tamil Nadu is under consideration and it was decided not to proceed with Chandigarh and the Chandigarh Administration intends to incorporate all panchayats areas in the Municipality).

In addition, two mega Conferences have been held. The first conference on the 'State of Panchayats and way forward' was held from 16—18 December, 2005 in New Delhi which was attended by Research Scholars, activists, functionaries and elected representatives of Panchayats. The second conference of 'Writers and Thinkers' was held in June, 2006 to discuss all aspects of Panchayati Raj in India including the measures to strengthen Panchayati Raj and to take it forward.

Full details on all these measures will be found in the "State of the Panchayats—Mid-Term Review and Appraisal" submitted to the House in three volumes on 23 November, 2006.

Assistance for Implementing RTI Act

1106. SHRI THENNALA G. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any State Government had approached for Central Financial Assistance for the implementation of Right to Information Act, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the break-ups of the assistance provided, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) to (c) State Governments like the Government of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura and Uttarakhand, sought Central assistance for implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The Parliament has, by law, cast an obligation on the State Governments

to implement the Act. The State Governments are required to meet the statutory obligation out of their own funds.

Memorandum from disabled persons

1107. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a memorandum has been received from disabled persons regarding the number of times they can appear for the competitive exams; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is being examined.

Guidelines for posting husband and wife at the same Station

1108. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any specific guideline for posting of husband and wife in the same place if both of them work under Central and State Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) to (c) Guidelines regarding posting of husband and wife at the same station have been issued *vide* the Department of Personnel O.M. No. 28034/7/86-Estt(A) dated 3.4.1986. These guidelines, in relation to a case where one spouse is employed under the Central Government and the other spouse employed under the State Government, have provided that the spouse employed under the Central Government may apply to the competent authority and the competent authority may post the said officer to the station or, if there is no post in that station, to the State where the other spouse is posted.